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THE "MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM."

[EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.]

.... You, dear friend, must of course be the first to hear something about the *Midsummer's Night Dream* from me. We saw it at last yesterday—the first performance for some three hundred years. It was a happy thought of the manager to bring it out in winter; for, in summer, the *Winter's Tale* would obviously be more to one's taste. Many, I can assure you, only saw Shakspeare for the sake of hearing Mendelssohn. Not so with me. I always knew that Mendelssohn was not like one of those second-rate actors who take care to let every one know when they have a chance of playing in company with their superiors; and accordingly he has made the music (except the overture) a mere accompaniment, a medium or bridge between Bottom and Oberon, without which the transition to fairyland would be almost impossible—a part which the music must have played even in Shakspeare's time. If any one expected more than this, they must have been disappointed; the music is even more subordinate than in the *Antigone*, where, it is true, the choruses obliged him to use it more largely. In the regular business of the play, and in the love-scenes, it takes no part; except once, where it illustrates in a very touching way, *Hermia's* search for her lover. This number is admirable throughout. Elsewhere it merely accompanies the fairy-scenes; and there, as I need not tell you, Mendelssohn is in his element—nobody more so. About the Overture, there has never been but one opinion; though of course some "translated* Bottom" will always be found to bray disapproval. It has more of the bloom of youth than any of his works: even at that early age he was a skilful artist, and chose a truly happy moment for his first and highest flight.

It touched me exceedingly to see fragments of the Overture making their appearance in the more recent numbers of the work; the only place where I found fault with it was at the end of all, where the close of the Overture is repeated note for note. It is easy to see that his object was to round off the composition, but this way of doing it seems to me commonplace. The last scene ought surely to be the liveliest of all; at any rate, I had imagined that a great effect might be made, and expected something altogether fresh and original. Only think of the scene; the fairies swarming in through every chink and cranny of the house for their dance; Puck

"— sent, with broom, before,
To sweep the dust behind the door:"

and Oberon giving his benediction:—

"Now until the break of day
Through this house each fairy stray.

* Enter BOTTOM with an ass's head.

Quince. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee, thou art translated.

And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace!"

One can imagine nothing more beautiful for music. Perhaps he will still write something new for it. To me, therefore, it seemed as if the climax of the piece were wanting; and notwithstanding all the charming things in the previous acts; notwithstanding Bottom's ass's head—which no doubt pleased many, even now-a-days; notwithstanding the magic of the night in the forest, and the perplexities of the lovers, which no one can forget; notwithstanding all this, the whole gave me somewhat the impression of a *curiosity*.

About the rest, I assure you when the clowns and fairies first enter, the music is wonderfully refined and spirited; and the orchestra sounds as droll and full of music as if the fairies themselves had got into the instruments—altogether a new effect. Most lovely, too, is the air and chorus immediately following it—"Ye spotted snakes,"—and so, in fact, is every place where the fairies are at work. Then there's a march (the first, I think, that Mendelssohn has written) before the end of all; it slightly recalls the march in Spohr's *Weiber de Töne*, and might otherwise have been more original; but it has a most charming trio. The orchestra, under the direction of M. D. Bach, played capitally, and the actors took great pains, but the mounting of the piece might almost be called shabby. It is to be repeated to-day.

MONSIEUR JULLIEN.

This gentleman was so well known, and as the leader of an orchestra so well appreciated in this country, that we make no excuse for extracting the following concise description of his career and singular death from a foreign periodical. It is written by an old associate, from memoranda furnished by Madame Jullien:

M. Jullien was born at Sisteron, in the Lower Alps, April 23, 1212. His mother was an Italian. His father, a Frenchman, was professor of music, and conductor of the Garde Nationale. Jullien gave early indication of his talent for music. The first musical instrument he learnt to play was the drum, on which he performed in the band when quite a child. Afterwards he studied the violin, and on that instrument was the principal attraction as an infant prodigy at some concerts his father gave in the principal towns in Italy. When a lad, he went on board the man-of-war *La Sirene*, his father having been appointed conductor of the ship's band. He was present at the battle of Navarino. His father being ill, he did duty for him as conductor, and the admiral wishing to hear some of the music of *Der Freischütz* by the band, young Jullien set about scoring it from a piano-forte copy.

After the war was over he returned to France, and played for six months on the piccolo in the band of one of the regiments of the line. He had a great desire to go to Paris and study composition at the Conservatoire, and for that purpose started on foot for Paris, and entered the Conservatoire un-

der Cherubini and Halevy. He had to play in the orchestras of the Barriere to earn enough to keep him. His performances attracted the attention of the proprietor of the Jardin Turc, who made him conductor of that establishment. He there created an immense sensation by playing the "Nightingale Valse" on the piccolo. All Paris flocked to hear him. He there formed the acquaintance of Rossini. One evening after the performance of the overture of "*Guillaume Tell*," the composer came up and introduced himself, saying he was Rossini the composer, and wished to suggest some slight alteration in the "reading" of the overture.

The great maestro was so delighted with the readiness of the conductor to fall in with his suggestion, that they were ever afterwards friends, and Rossini obtained for him the direction of the Bals d'Opera. Jullien was at this time the idol of the Paris public, making about £4,000 a year. He was, however, young and reckless, and spent his money faster than he earned it. When at the height of his popularity in Paris, he opened the celebrated casino in the Chaussee d'Antin. The success of this undertaking was so great that the managers of the theatres endeavored to suppress it, and the police authorities were induced to order the room to be closed. This led Jullien to publish a programme, in which he turned the French government into ridicule, and for this offence he was condemned to imprisonment and a heavy fine. To escape this punishment he fled to England, where he made his first appearance at Drury Lane Theatre, in 1838. Eliason was then the manager of the theatre, and engaged Jullien to conduct the dance music. His success was so great that Eliason soon made him *conducteur en chef*.

In 1841 he made his first provincial tour, and in 1842 opened the Lyceum for promenade concerts. At the end of that season Jullien returned to Paris, being promised by Louis Philippe that if he surrendered himself he should be pardoned. He underwent a short imprisonment at St. Pelagie, with other political offenders, and was liberated.

In the spring of 1843 he returned to London, and made a large sum of money by publishing his own polkas and valse. In November of 1843 he gave a second series of concerts at the English opera. He then accepted a proposal to join Mr. Gye, who, for a short time, had been employed by him as manager in some concerts at Covent Garden. This partnership in concerts continued up to Jullien's departure for America in 1853.

In 1847 Jullien opened Drury Lane as an English opera, and introduced Sims Reeves to the London public. This undertaking was unfortunate, and the manager became bankrupt. On his examination, he was highly complimented by the commissioner, who told him that he left the court without a stain upon his character.

In 1853 his opera "*Peter the Great*" was produced at Covent Garden. In July, 1853, he left for America, under engagement to his London publishers. The expenses of this expedition completely absorbed the receipts and £5,000 besides. Instead of relying upon Jullien's name as the great attraction which it really was, a mistaken policy induced the managers to take out a number of instrumental performers, whose salaries and living cost more than the receipts could possibly cover. Jullien remained in America until June, 1854, and visited every town of importance in the United States. It was at his concerts that

the English custom was introduced in America, of rising while the national anthem, "Hail Columbia," was sung.

On his return to England, he went to his chateau near Waterloo, in Belgium, where he used to say that he had so cut the trees of a certain plantation that when the wind was in the south they played the slow movement of Mendelssohn's Scotch symphony.

Jullien remained at his chateau until the concerts began at Drury Lane in the autumn of 1854. They were so successful that they were carried on at Convent Garden after Christmas.

In 1856 the Surrey Gardens were opened by a company, a magnificent hall having been built for Jullien's promenade concerts. I was interested with Jullien in that undertaking, and had arranged to pay all expenses, vocalists, &c., for half the receipts, Jullien finding the band and his own services for the other half.

This was rather a one-sided division, considering I included Grisi, Gassier, Alboni, and other "stars" in my list of payments. The arrangement was for a fortnight. At the end of the first week the band struck for arrears of salaries due to them, not by Jullien, but by the company that had failed. The musicians declared they would not perform unless I endorsed their engagements, and made myself liable for the whole debt. Their determination was made formally known to Jullien one Saturday afternoon in the Gardens, after the morning concert had taken place. I was absent. Jullien sent his Secretary to my house to fetch me. In order to keep the band together until I arrived, and could make some arrangement, Jullien made them a speech, addressing them from a chair on which he stood, and from which he would have the first intimation of my approach. He spoke for some time, and I believe very nearly succeeded in inducing the band to do as he wished them without my intercession. In the excitement of speaking he knelt down and repeated a few words in French. He had seen me enter the Gardens. As I came near the little crowd of instrumentalists, Jullien jumped up from among them on to the chair, and pointing to me, said—"Gentlemen, my prayers have been heard; *voilà l'homme avec l'argent*." The musicians hurried round me like a swarm of bees on a lump of sugar.

I did not, however, pay them; but Jullien got the assistance of a military band then playing in the Gardens, and the concert that evening was duly performed, Jullien telling the audience that his Sepoys had revolted; and that had it not been for the gallantry of the British soldiers, he would have been sacrificed. It was during the time of the Indian Rebellion, and the effect of the speech was tremendous.

In 1857 his cornet-a-piston player, Koenig, died insane at Paris. The loss of one with whom he had so long associated had a serious effect on Jullien, and from this period his energies seemed to fail him; he was most anxious to return to France. His last concerts in London took place at the Lyceum in 1858. His last appearance in public was at the Free-Trade Hall, Manchester, in the early part of February, 1859. After this he left England, broken in health and spirits. He went to Paris, where he was imprisoned for debt at Clichy. He was arrested as an Englishman, at the suit of an Englishman. This greatly increased his mental excitement, which had been for some time apparent. On being liberated he arranged to give some

concerts on a grand scale at the Cirque Impérial, in the Champs Elysees. The first was to have taken place on March 12, 1860, but it was found necessary to put him under restraint some weeks before that time.

He was sitting at the piano-forte one morning, when he suddenly rose with a knife in his hand, and, addressing a young lady who was on a visit in the house, told her he had an inspiration from heaven to kill her. With wonderful presence of mind she declared she was ready to die, but asked him to grant her one favor before fulfilling his mission. "What is it?" he replied; "I have power to agree to what you may demand." She begged that he would let her hear him play some of his own compositions on the piccolo. He consented, and went into an adjoining room to fetch the instrument. She turned the key upon him and rang for assistance. He was taken to Dr. Pinet's Maison de Sante, known as La Folie St. James, where he died, raving mad, on March 14, 1860.

MUSICAL MATTERS IN FRANCE.

The *Figaro* of the 14th of June, says: last night, at nine o'clock, Rossini sent to the Emperor the score of the Hymn which he has composed, and which is to be performed at the moment of the entrance of the Sovereigns in the grand Nave of the Palace of Industry, on the 1st of July, the day of the distribution of the awards to the exhibitors in L'Exposition Universelle. The performance of the Hymn has been confided to M. M. Georges Haivel and his orchestra, Jules Cohen and his chorus, and Paulus with his military bands. The score demands the extraordinary accompaniment of enormous bells, and many salvos of artillery. I invent nothing, says the chronicler, M. Alfred d'Aunay; I only copy the too last indications of the partition of the Maestro. The Sovereigns who will enter to the sound of this formidable music, are the Emperor and Empress of France, the Emperor and Empress of Austria, the Sultan of Turkey, the King and Queen of Portugal, the King of Egypt, and the King of Sweden and Norway; also the Prince de Galles, the Prince and Princess Royal of Prussia, and the municipal representatives of London, Edinburgh and Dublin.

The *Figaro* also gives the details of the decorations of the Hall, which contains 16000 numbered stalls. A large portion of the grand Nave is ornamented.

More than half of the grand Nave is decorated with tapestry of scarlet velvet, enriched by golden lace-work. A monumental organ is placed back of the orchestra, awaiting its thousand performers. The workmen of the Imperial furniture-repository are about decorating the stage of the throne and the saloon in front of it.

After the Festival of Peace the grand Nave of the Palais de l'Industrie will retain its magnificent decoration, and serve for the solemnities organized under the care of the committee on musical works. The following is the programme:—

FIRST PART.

Overture d'Iphigénie en Aulide of Gluck; to which Halévy has written a Coda.

Chorus of Soldiers, from *Faust*, by Gounod, performed by two orchestras.

Fragments from the Armide, by Gluck.

A. *Poici la charmante retraite*. Chorus.

B. *Gavotte*. Orchestra.

C. *Jamais dans ces beaux lieux*. Chorus.

Overture, Fra Diavolo, by Auber.

SECOND PART.

March from the Prophet, by Meyerbeer. With two orchestras.

Evening Song, Chorus by Félicien David, with orchestra and Solos for Flutes and Violoncellos.

Prélude de l'Africaine, Meyerbeer.

Prayer from Moïse, Rossini, with twenty-five harps.

THIRD PART.

Overture of Jeune Henri, by Méhul, with the addition of a second orchestra for the Military Finale.

Hymne à la France, Berlioz, with chorus and orchestra.

L'Annonciation, *Marche Religieuse*, A. Adam, with orchestra and twenty-five harps.

Chorus from Judas Maccabée, Handel, with Chorus, Soprano Solo, Organ and Orchestra.

The Concert will be directed by Mr. George Haivel.

The Second Concert of the Conservatoire, in honor of the Exposition, was given on the 16th of June, and comprised the following programme: Symphony in C Minor, by Beethoven; the Chorus of the Deux Avars, by Gretry; Fragments from the Septuor of Beethoven; "O Filii," double chorus, by Leisring; Overture to Der Freischütz, by Weber; and a Psalm by Mariello.

The three pieces selected by the Conservatoire for the trial performance this year, are, for the males, the Second Concerto, by Chopin; for the females, the First Concerto, by Hiller, and for the piano class, males and females, the First Concerto by Herz.

On the Fourth of July there will be given a grand instrumental concert, at which it is probable that the Hymne à l'Empereur, by Rossini, will be performed for the second time. Also the Cantata composed by M. Saint-Saëns.

On the 5th and 7th of July, the Festival of the French Orphéonistes will take place, under the direction of M. Laurent (de Rellé).

On the 8th of July, the International Festival of the various Orpheon Societies will take place. There will be six thousand performers. The following representative societies will take part in the Festival: for France, three hundred and forty choral societies and twelve Orpheon military bands. For Belgium, the Royal Choral Society de Gand, the Royal Society de Légia de Liège, and the Society Roland de Lattre, de Hall, &c., &c. For Prussia, the Society Polymnia de Cologne. For England, the Tonic-fa-sol Association and the Walton Lodge Society. For Switzerland, La Giulianne de Genève.

On July 14th, a Festival of wind instruments.

On July 15th and 16th, a concours for wind instruments.

On July 21st, International concours of military music. These last four solemnities will take place under the direction of M. Emile Jonas. Twelve military orchestras will participate in this concours, in which, France, England, Russia, Austria, Prussia, Bavaria, Spain, Belgium, Holland, and the Grand-Duchy of Baden will find themselves represented. Four grand prizes of the respective value of 5,000fr., 3,000fr., 2,000fr., and 1,000fr., will be contended for, by twelve musical corps, ten of which are foreign and two French. The historical concerts which are to be given at the same place, and also under the care of the imperial commission, will probably not take place before the month of August.

The committee on composition at the General Exhibition have unanimously, and at the first scrutiny, awarded the unique prize to the cantata presented to the international musical concours by M. Camille Saint-Saëns. The jury was composed of MM. Aubert, Ambroise Thomas, Berlioz,